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Viet Distorts Aid Program

WASHINGTON—President Johnson to put it politely has permitted Adm. William F. Raborn to resign as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, but he also permitted Raborn, as his last important act in office, to snub the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

And the President, supposedly the greatest practical politician in modern American history, wonders why that powerful committee has put his foreign aid bill through a fearsome grilling.



It is hard to understand how this master politician, who will go to any length to appease Sen. Everett M. Dirksen (R-Ill.), the minority Leader, or Sen. Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.), the leader of the Southern conservatives, will at the same time give the back of his hand to the prestigious group of senators who dominate the Foreign Relations Committee.

The hostility the President has inspired in that committee is by no means confined to the chairman, Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), for the overwhelming committee votes against the administration's foreign aid bill indicate a widespread resentment against Mr. Johnson, as well as a growing distrust of his foreign policy.

WHY DOES THE PRESIDENT choose to aggravate this situation, rather than, as his custom, ameliorate it? The only answer seems to be that, where Viet Nam is concerned, he has lost his political touch, and is unable to control his personal feelings toward those who have criticized and opposed his Asian policy.

It is unfortunate that the foreign aid bill should end up being the innocent bystander in this conflict. The Foreign Relations Committee relented considerably at the last minute, so that the bill as finally reported out is not in critical condition, but there is no doubt that it took a mauling.

Perhaps these senators, usually so responsible, should not have let their feelings influence them in cutting the bill and hedging it with awkward restrictions, but they, too, are human, and don't like to be called "nervous Nellies" or have their patriotism questioned, directly or indirectly.

The plain fact is that Mr. Johnson and Sec. of State Dean Rusk have provoked the present hostility. While the aid bill was still being considered, Raborn informed Fulbright that the CIA could not confidentially brief members of his committee, as it does a so-called "watchdog" group of senators from the Armed Services and Appropriations committees.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that the CIA director could not have brushed off the Foreign Relations Committee without the concurrence or encouragement of the President. Nobody knows better than Mr. Johnson how strongly the Foreign Relations Committee feels it should share in the surveillance of the CIA.

Rusk invited trouble when he tried to suggest that previous Viet Nam aid authorization constituted at least negative approval of administration policy in that area. This prompted an amendment of the bill's policy declaration to say that the "furnishing of economic, military or other assistance under this act, shall not be construed as creating a new commitment . . . to use armed forces of the United States for the defense of any foreign country."

Later, by a vote of 15 to 4, the committee ripped out the entire administration policy declaration, which stated it was the intention of Congress through military aid to improve "the ability of friendly countries and international organizations to deter or if necessary to defeat aggression. . . ."

ASIDE FROM ANY personal animosities, there is a genuine fear that Viet Nam has seriously imbalanced U.S. policy.



NE WIN

Committee members were frankly appalled at the distortions involved in earmarking nearly \$600,000,000 in economic aid for tiny Viet Nam, which is more than is scheduled for whole continents like Africa and Latin America.

Many of the senators share the views of Gen. Ne Win, the Burmese chief of state, about the unleashing of huge U.S. spending in Asian countries like his.

"This kind of aid," says Ne Win, "does not help. It cripples. It paralyzes. The recipients never learn to do for themselves. They rely more and more on foreign experts and foreign money. In the end they lose control of their country."

There are a lot of things wrong with Burma, but there is no graft or corruption among the top officials. They are not becoming millionaires, and they are not acquiring fancy mistresses or fancy Swiss bank accounts. This would, of course, be a terrible hardship for the United States to impose on some of its Asian beneficiaries, but it would be popular with the Senate.